

John Vincent  
New Haven, VT  
LD 178

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is John Vincent. Through ongoing initiatives at Colby College I have had the honor to attend a number of on-line meetings to directly engage with incarcerated residents at the Maine State Prison. I am a retired Prince George's County, Maryland police officer and a former resident of Maine, now residing in New Haven, Vermont.

I write you today in support of LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine.

I believe parole to be such an integral part of our current justice system, one that recognizes and rewards people who do the internal work of transforming their lives to realize that they are much more than just their past behavior that got them into their present circumstance.

I believe in that power of transformation. When people are able to heal and to recognize their own humanity this legislation would then give them the hope in returning to their families and communities and restoring their place in society instead of continuing a prolonged separation.

I believe there is a comparison to be made between the unique opportunity afforded the Maine legislature at this moment in enacting LD 178, and the philosophy of the Maine Department of Corrections and their new Model of Corrections, and its stated goal "to rebuild and transform lives" with "principles of normalization and humanization, with emphasis on destigmatization, respect, and modernization," while it "continues to emphasize the importance of sound community transition practices and safe Maine communities."

I believe that re-establishing parole will further demonstrate Maine's commitment to recognize the shared humanity of all its residents by normalizing as accepted practices (to quote again from the Maine Model of Corrections): "residents working collaboratively to model problem-solving, community building, and healthy interactions with others."

I believe everyone will benefit with the re-allocation of resources away from some of the current practices of law enforcement, courts and custody to more humane and modern methods within a system of justice, of which parole is a very important consideration.

Thank you for your work and for considering my opinion. I hope you will support LD 178.

Sincerely,

John Vincent  
New Haven, Vermont